

**SCOTTSDALE TOURISM DEVELOPMENT COMMISSION
CITY OF SCOTTSDALE
PINNACLE CONFERENCE ROOM
7575 EAST MAIN STREET
SCOTTSDALE, ARIZONA
NOVEMBER 15, 2005
MINUTES**

MEMBERS PRESENT:

Ned Sickle, Chairman
John Holdsworth, Vice-Chairman
Margaret Dunn, Commissioner
Tom Morrow, Commissioner
Gordon Zuckerman, Commissioner

ABSENT: Jerry Gleason, Commissioner
Sally Shaffer, Commissioner

STAFF: Bob Cafarella
Kathy O'Connor
Kathy Montalvo
Jennifer Hawkes

OTHERS PRESENT FOR ALL OR PART OF THE MEETING:

Brent DeRaad
Carla
Councilman Ecton
Mitch Nichols
Rachel Sacco
Phil Weddell

1. CALL TO ORDER

Chairman Sickle called the regular meeting of the Scottsdale Tourism Development Commission to order at 2:06 p.m.

2. ROLL CALL

A formal roll call confirmed members present as stated above, noting the presence of a quorum.

3. APPROVAL OF OCTOBER 18 AND 26, 2005 MINUTES

COMMISSIONER MORROW MOVED APPROVAL OF THE MINUTES OF THE MEETINGS OF OCTOBER 18 AND 26, 2005. COMMISSIONER DUNN SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF 5 (FIVE) TO 0 (ZERO).

**4. DESERT DISCOVERY CENTER FEASIBILITY STUDY/UPDATE
PROPOSED CHANGE**

Ms. O'Connor introduced the agenda item, noting that Tom Silverman, Chairman of the Desert Discover Planning Committee, was unfortunately unable to attend. Carla from the McDowell Sonoran Conservancy, Mr. Bob Cafarella, Preservation Director, and Mitch Nichols, the consultant on the study were in attendance.

Ms. O'Connor presented a brief overview, highlighting that the consultants had returned to staff and the Planning Committee with findings that have implications for the feasibility study.

Mr. Nichols addressed the Commission regarding the concept. As the consultants began their work they had some questions about how the concept fits into today's environment and how visitors will use the facility, as well as concerns that the budget was insufficient to create a cutting-edge center that would encourage visitors to come. The real attraction is the McDowell Mountains, and the Desert Discovery Center can help visitors fully experience the McDowells. The consultants suggested to the subcommittee that the site of the Desert Discovery Center be reconsidered. Placing the Discovery Center and the gateway together makes sense on many levels and would maximize utilization of the area.

Ms. O'Connor noted that Chairman Sickle and Ms. Sacco are also on the subcommittee and have heard the consultants' presentation. If the Commission is agreeable to the scope refinement, an additional amount of \$14,500 would be required from the bed tax to allow those issues to be addressed. These monies are available in the budget. Adding this money to the last third of the existing budget would accommodate the elements of the project that were not included with the original study.

Mr. Nichols confirmed that raising the issues to the Commission for direction is the correct approach. The \$12,000 remaining in the budget coupled with the addition of \$14,500 from bed tax monies would enable the scope to be refined. He further noted that the consultants believe they can move forward at a rapid pace and would be ready with a different concept for the siting and integration of the gateway access area within two and a-half months.

Carla reported having spoken with Mr. Silverman and noted that they both feel very strongly that the consultants are right on target with the issues they have

identified and their recommendations. From a fiscal standpoint it makes sense to make the change now and do it right. From a timing standpoint it also makes more sense to do it all right now. The Audubon Center will be opening in Phoenix and the zoo is making significant improvements. The Preserve needs to keep up.

Commissioner Dunn commented that this is instrumental in the Scottsdale community and that it should be done properly. She wholeheartedly supports the scope of the project.

Vice-Chairman Holdsworth said the synergies appear to make sense. He asked whether there is any sense of potential overrun of the original budget.

Mr. Nichols stated that the change here is to make the McDowell Mountains the experience, as opposed to the Desert Discovery Center. He noted that a great deal of expectations are riding on the way this facility will function and its importance into the future.

Vice-Chairman Holdsworth echoed Commissioner Dunn's comments and remarked that if the program was right, spending more might be considered.

Mr. Weddell stated that the intention is to keep the scope of the project the same size as originally proposed. However, the budgets that were developed in 1999 were tight at the time and in the meantime construction costs have risen steeply. It would be difficult to say that what was originally programmed could be built for the same budget today.

Commissioner Morrow opined that the Discovery Center has the potential to be the heart of tourism in Scottsdale. Some of that is because of access. Access is important to maximize the tourism potential. He noted that based upon conversations he has had with Mr. Silverman, they are in agreement on this point. Getting visitors to actually enter the Preserve is key. He expects that the Preserve people will come back to the Commission and request money. He would look favorably on their request, but would make it contingent on access. He recalled that in the past, the Tourism Development Commission has given funding for projects such as the museum and WestWorld without input into the projects. In this case, however, he urged that the Tourism Development Commission submit input that will benefit the tourism and hospitality community.

VICE-CHAIRMAN HOLDSWORTH MOVED TO GRANT THE ADDITIONAL \$14,500 FROM THE BED TAX RECEIPTS FOR THE ADDITIONAL RESEARCH. COMMISSIONER MORROW SECONDED THE MOTION, WHICH CARRIED UNANIMOUSLY BY A VOTE OF 5 (FIVE) TO 0 (ZERO).

5. ITEMS FROM THE FLOOR

Ms. O'Connor asked for clarification regarding the next meeting date. The consensus of the Commission was that there would not be a need for a December meeting, as long as the one action item that would be on the December agenda can be handled without the December meeting.

6. PUBLIC COMMENTS

None.

12. ADJOURNMENT

With no further business before the Commission, being duly moved and seconded, the meeting adjourned at 2:28 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,
A/V Tronics, Inc.